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Sjögren's Syndrome Foundation Rheumatology Clinical Practice Guidelines Published

Bethesda, MD - As we prepare to celebrate World Sjögren's Day on July 23rd, the SSF is excited to announce the publication of the first U.S. Rheumatology Clinical Practice Guidelines for Sjögren's. Published in *Arthritis Care and Research*, these rheumatology guidelines were designed to improve quality and consistency of care for Sjögren's patients by offering clinicians recommendations for disease management. Among the recommendations, the guidelines address issues such as the use of biologic agents, management of fatigue, and inflammatory musculoskeletal pain in systemic Sjögren's.

Steven E. Carsons, MD, and Ann Parke, MD, co-chaired the rheumatology clinical practice guideline committee that led the effort to develop clinical questions about the management of Sjögren's. After extensive literature review and data extraction, draft recommendations were considered by a consensus expert panel consisting of academic and community practice clinicians, registered nurses and patients. The expert panel reached consensus on nineteen recommendations.

Steven Taylor, CEO of the SSF, says: "Over 100 Sjögren's experts volunteered their time and efforts to make our Clinical Practice Guidelines initiative a reality. These first ever, standard of care guidelines for systemic Sjögren's in the U.S. will fill a significant clinical void. But beyond that, the guidelines will inform health care coverage policy, lead to needed educational programs, and highlight opportunities for future research."

With the publication of the Rheumatology guidelines, the SSF has now published Oral, Ocular, and Rheumatology Clinical Practice Guidelines for Sjögren's under the leadership of Frederick Vivino, MD, FACR, Chief of Rheumatology, Presbyterian Medical Center, University of Pennsylvania.

To find out more about the development and dissemination of Clinical Practice Guidelines for Sjögren's, contact the SSF office at 1-800-475-6473 or visit their website, www.sjogrens.org.

Sjögren's ("SHOW-grins") is the second most prevalent rheumatic autoimmune disorder, striking as many as 4 million Americans with an estimated 2 million cases currently undiagnosed. Early diagnosis and treatment are important for preventing complications with Sjögren's. Unfortunately, reaching a diagnosis is often difficult and has been found to take an average of 3.5 years from the onset of symptoms.

Sjögren's is a systemic autoimmune disease that affects the entire body. Along with symptoms of extensive dryness, other serious complications include profound fatigue, chronic pain, major organ involvement, neuropathies and lymphomas.